

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
AUGUST 17, 2017

PRESENT: Lynn Koogle, Mike Kuhn, Mark Heistand, Jeff Fannin and Tom Winning

ABSENT: None

ALSO PRESENT: Matthew Smith, Farmers and Merchants Bank; Gwen Eberly, Montgomery County Economic Development, Michael Norton-Smith, Montgomery County Economic Development and Pat Higgins, City Grant Writer

MINUTES:

Mr. Koogle motioned to approve the July 20, 2017 minutes with one correction noted regarding the next meeting date should be August 17, 2017.

VOICE VOTE ON ABOVE MOTION. ALL IN FAVOR. MOTION CARRIED.

BUSINESS:

Gwen Eberly and Michael Norton-Smith with Montgomery County Economic Development Department began their presentation with an overview of the Business First Program. Gwen indicated the Business First Program began in 2001 and today includes five counties and 32 jurisdictions. The main focus of the Business First program is business retention. The program has evolved over the years to be business friendly. In the beginning business were surveyed by economic development staffs using a very complex survey. Today, the Business Walk Program is one of the ways to reach out to the businesses in communities. They also hold Business Round Table discussions to bring businesses together to hear what issues there may be and where they might need help. Success stories are also presented.

Michael presented a PowerPoint presentation summarizing the Germantown Business Walk that was held on July 13, 2017. Letters were sent to 50 businesses informing them of the planned walk; 26 businesses were visited during the walk and 5 businesses were left informational packets. The Business Walk included 12 volunteers/resource partners and 6 representatives from the city.

Of the businesses visited, 53 % owned their building and 70 employees are working in the downtown. With regard to municipal services, 83% responded the city services were good or excellent; much higher than other community results. Survey highlighted the biggest opportunities: support from Germantown residents, very loyal customer base and leverage the metro parks in the area. Biggest challenges were: Loss of businesses and eateries, want City to be more business friendly and need for a checklist for start-ups. Also mentioned was the conditions of the streets and the need for more parking. Regarding the city, comments included: strong and diverse downtown business environment; make Germantown a Destination City and Police, Fire and EMS rated highly.

A brief discussion was held regarding the need to continue to look at the parking concerns downtown. Mike Kuhn mentioned that Burkhart Engineering has developed a parking plan for their employees to ease the parking on the street. The committee suggested an evening meeting be held to review the Business Walk findings and discuss the parking. Members of the Chamber and the Breakfast group

would be invited along with all the businesses. Suggested a letter be sent with the Business Walk result factsheet inviting them to the meeting. Target early October for the meeting.

Sign Code was briefly discussed to inform the committee, the city is updating the code to address: size, height and placement of signs. Code is also going to address electronic changeable copy signs. Committee suggested having a sign code presentation by the planning staff at the next meeting.

A brief discussion was held regarding the Fairpoint building and the need to address the condition of the window sills on this historic property.

A summary of the Five Rivers Metroparks preliminary plans for Germantown Metropark and Twin Creek Metropark and the possibility to connect the parks together with Germantown as the HUB was discussed.

The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, September 21, 2017

ADJOURNMENT:

Respectfully Submitted,

Kelli R. Sanders-Novak
Clerk of Council